

Interview and discussion with Dorland J. and Elizabeth Henderson at their home on Old Road to Bloomfield, 2 March 1984.

Questions: when did Ken Gibson get his PE? When did Al Zach graduate from NCE? Did he know Gibson before he was hired in Newark, and where did they meet?

Alvin Zach, Jr. 8 Lisa Court, East Brunswick, NJ 08816. Lic. GB 13461. (Roster, June 30, 1983)

Kenneth A. Gibson, 91 Shanley Avenue, Newark 07108. Lic. GE 12635. Listed in 1977 Roster, p. 47.

(GE=Professional Engineer; GB=Professional Engineer/Land Surveyor; GS=Land Surveyor)  
Source: Roster Licensed Professional Engineers and Surveyors, April 1, 1981, State of New Jersey, Dept. of Law and Public Safety, Newark, NJ.

Why did Gibson fail to get a Federal post (esp. HUD Secy) in the Carter administration?  
Reported that when Carter came to NJ and Newark to campaign, Gibson was "too busy" to take Carter around the city.

DJ retired from the State Highway Dept. in 1970.

In 1969 Steve Aduabato rented a storefront on Mt. Prospect Avenue between Elwood and Heller; he was seeking control of the N Ward Democratic Party, asked DJ to run for district leader but DJ would not, Hatch Act. Struggle with Oscar Gfard, "the devil incarnate."

DJ agreed to run in 1970 after retirement, began to canvass the district, esp. the apts. His opponent spread the report that he was black, and Aduabato had the nerve to put the question to him! Lost by 5 votes out of 200. ("Could DJ say he was Indian?")

Steve was originally for Caufield in the 1970 mayoral election, and so was DJ, who had helped prepare hundreds of envelopes for mailing for Caufield; found the envelopes stacked in the rear of the storefront office; Aduabato was switching to Gibson on the sly. Henderson worked for Caufield and then went for Gibson in the runoff. Caufield was an honest man but "earnest to the point of being a bore."

Leonard Savoy and his wife Virginia Savoy: DDS, office on Mulberry Street until he moved to a fine home on Clinton Avenue corner of Clinton Place. DJ arranged for Gibson to visit the Savoy home in the 1970 campaign; Savoy had given \$100 to the campaign. Betty met him there; he entered with two big bodyguards, neither of whom had the courtesy to remove their hats until requested. She told Gibson that "Every-time the name of LeRoi Jones is mentioned, a shiver goes through the North Ward." He growled a reply, "I dunneed /don't need/ the North Ward." Later he learned the facts of life, courted Aduabato, goes to NWECC. *Speech*

Aduabato gets \$500,000 or more a year in grants to run his show. His key backers are Msgr. Gino Baroni and Rodino. Today he is engaged in a real estate fixup in the area. Eshelman is a key aide.

Carl Sharif was the cutting edge of the Muslim effort to takeover the Newark schools. When DJ ran for N Ward councilman in 1974, youngsters (ages 8-10 or so) playing in the courtyard at Walsh homes scattered when they saw him enter. Was that due to Muslim indoctrination, be wary of the white-looking man?

The black politicians (Gibson, Young, Bradley, Don Tucker...) are "trying to develop a cocoon where they would remain big frogs in a little pond." Why else does Tucker identify so closely with black officialdom nationally? J. Jackson seeks to take advantage of this feeling in his presidential candidacy.

Gibson wants to keep middle class whites out of Newark so as not to undermine his power base. Why has James Street been sabotaged? The city will not sell brownstones that are suitable for rehab to thwart the gentrification movement. Some leaders of the Landmarks Preservation Committee know this. (This may be why the mayor has never filled the Commission est. by ordinance to designate city landmarks)

For many years, back in the 1930s and 1940s, the Republicans controlled the black votes in Newark, the Oranges, through organizations like the NAACP with weak, pliant leadership. Stanley Naughtright was Republican County Chairman in 1936, his hq in Newark. Russ Gates succeeded Naughtright.

In 1940 the Oranges and Maplewood Branch NAACP had 5 members. DJ became chairman, and in one year they gained up to 200 members. Within 4-5 years, there was a State Conference of NAACP Branches under way. The Newark Herald-News was founded by Fred Martin of Jersey City and his brother (it preceded the Afro in Newark).

Mrs. Savoy was Harold Lett's mainstay, supporter. Alene Simpkins Lett was Harold's second wife; his children came from his first marriage. Alene was manager at Baxter Terrace, then supervised leasing and occupancy of apartments (tenant selection?), replaced in 1948-49 by Danzig; then in 1959 named manager at Stella Wright Houses along Barclay Street.

Lett's daughter Norma married Richard Bland, son of Bertram Bland, attorney; Richard became manager at Hayes Homes when they opened in 1955-56.

DJ attempted to get to the bottom of what was happening at the Bordentown School in the 1940s (not to be confused with Bordentown Academy or later Bordentown; it was a private school, yet operated with infusion of public funds, designed to handle children unfit for normal schooling). It was an all-black school under Mr. Valentine (from Indianapolis; DJ originally came from Indiana himself). The Assn. of Teachers of Colored Children, headed by Bessie Nelms Hill, a teacher at Bordentown, opposed the shutting down of the school or the ending of segregation in NJ schools, feared the black teachers in those schools would lose their jobs; yer two years after the 1947 State Constitution was adopted, Hill was teaching at Trenton High School!

The main activity of the Newark NAACP in the 1940s was to have an annual picnic at Bordentown where the little children waited on them like servants. There was a commission running Bordentown headed by D. Howard, a white man, Senator from Burlington; it was supposed to train in animal husbandry but the children just took care of the Senator's prize bulls! Moreau, publisher of the Orange Record and other suburban papers, was head of the Commission. DJ wrote him a letter setting forth the facts and gave a copy to the Herald-News which published it before Moreau himself had seen it! Within half a year the school was closed as a result of the scandal.

Clarence Coggins is State Coordinator for Jackson at Gibson's bidding. Henderson reminded the City Council that Gibson had taken an official position on Jackson's candidacy, and that Coggins was his aide; DJ says this is improper for a public servant on the public payroll to accept an official position in a political campaign. None on the Council respond. Tucker calls DJ back "to clarify" thing but attributes to DJ something he did not say. Tucker is unstable; always huffing and puffing, has a run-in with Mrs. Villani over the school children in the audience.

Moreau  
published

Among the present councilmen, Carrino does his homework more than any other, with James next. They know what's going on; Tucker only makes accusations.

The most rapid turnover on the council is in the Central Ward, the area with the least residential stability. Branch recently voiced doubt as to whether he would still be councilman after this term.

Baraka was spending weekends in jail while teaching at Stony Brook during the week. The City Council gave Irvine Turner a citation posthumously; then while Lou Turco was awaiting sentencing after conviction, they gave him one for distinguished service to Newark.

Route 75: DJ had nothing to do with the preliminaries but later was asked to make an estimate of the cost of diesel and electrical installations to power pumps for drainage; there would be a great drainage problem, Newark's sewers could not handle this additional load and special lines would have to be installed. It was planned as a big cut, maybe 400 feet for the road bed and service roads. Ultimate, there was to be a connection between 280 and the Turnpike; 75 in the distant future might have run into Rte. 21 round Oriental Street. Henderson speaks vs. 75, writes to Dwight Palmer as a citizen of Newark (moved here in 1955); met with Russ Mullen, asst. commissioner of the State Highway Dept. Looked at the Edwards and Kelcey Report; Washington consultants had submitted an impact statement and minimized it.

(If the State, which took over McCarter Highway in 1921) had done what it planned, it could have been an excellent artery, double-decked. There is a huge sketch of the double-deck proposal in Trenton.). DJ reads his letter to Mullen. He proposed instead of 75, a series of elementary schools, business areas, strip playgrounds, and park sections, with pedestrian overpasses, flanked by two one way service roads, cutting north and south. Up to Orange St. down to 78. The proposal died with Rte. 75.

The double-decking of Rte. 21 dates to 1930. When a portion was done (from Oriental to the Belleville line) and the section from Oriental to Clay was widened, DJ wanted the State to take over the operation of all traffic signals in Newark (save those run by the county), with the city paying the electricity. Ed Cyr, Newark's Traffic Engineer for many years, was against this; claimed the State would be invading his (the city's) domain. Yet earlier he had okayed it, for Highway Commissioner Kilpatrick told him, "Why, you told me a month ago it would be okay." After the Dept. of Transportation was formed, all signal functions were transferred to the Division of Traffic (from Motor Vehicles), which DJ organized.

The fact is that there many illegal (not authorized) signals in Newark, also many illegal signs. Progress was very slow because the Div. Motor Vehicles moved very slowly on such matters.

The NAACP in the 40s: The OPA had its HQ in a Washington St. brownstone. They announced they were hiring people and several colored women applied; one was Mrs. Herbert Tate, but none was hired. The women came to DJ for help. He asked them to write down the exact details of their experience; obviously the interview had just been a formality. DJ wrote a letter to Mr. Kearny, publisher of the Trenton Times who was head of NJ OPA. He asked Kearny whether it was OPA policy not to hire colored applicants or just the tactics of lesser bureaucrats. A week later Mrs. Tate got a letter offering her a job! But she quit in a month, didn't fit in. Another woman was hired in her place; she was good and soon became a supervisor.

The Office of Dependency Benefits occupied a brick bldg. on Washington Street, on the west side opposite Pru's Gibraltar Bldg. Fred Martin and DJ found out that all colored employees were stationed on one and the same floor! This was in the 1940s, during WW II. They decided this has to be split up. Lett couldn't do anything for them, so they wrote directly to Washington NAACP, got Roy Wilkins and Thurgood Marshall (on counsel) to come to Newark to discuss it with them. They met with the ODB people, and that did the trick. They broke up the place, people were put all over the bldg. But one woman asked DJ, "Is there any restaurant in Newark which doesn't serve colored?" (She still wanted her little peace and quiet!)

Imperial seems to be finished now, with his son's conviction and his loss of elective office and loss in the last councilmanic campaign. But Kean is still paying off his campaign debt by appointing his aide Ammiano as State representative on the Newark RHA.

Several people report a squabble in the street between Muriel Gibson and Pearl Beatty ("you leave my husband alone!"). Elton Hill is now running for Freeholder and had a reception at ~~Quality~~ <sup>Gateway</sup> Inn for \$50-00 each to launch off.

\$100.00

(Future questions: about John Cervase, Dr. Donato, others in Italian community; about Jones and Kawaida Towers; about other personalities)

Stanley B. Winters

PS - DJ called Frank Parker (retired from Dept. of Transportation) the other day day to check if his recollection was correct of their meeting in the late summer of 1970 with Mayor Gibson. Parker confirmed DJ's recollection.

Suggested by V. Savoy { Gibson asked DJ to write a last-minute speech for him (after his "regular writers didn't produce it) to be delivered shortly before the runoff election before a group of businessmen at the Robert Treat. Henderson wrote a 2-page single spaced talk which Gibson delivered by reading in a stilted, "schoolboy" manner. Not very impressive.